

# ALFABULL



Newsletter of ALFABUFF Chapter

Alfa Romeo Owners Club, Buffalo, New York

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Spring 2010

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**March 22 Regular Meeting** My Tomato Pie, Northtown Plaza. Dinner at 6, meeting at 7. Contact Will for further information.

**April 14 Indoor Karting** 7 PM at AJ's Grand Prix, 1888 Niagara Falls Boulevard, Tonawanda. Cost is \$22/person and includes 3 races and 40 game tokens/person, pizza and unlimited soda. Minimum of 10 required for this deal. Contact Will if interested. Open to all our friends and family. [www.ajsgrandprix.com](http://www.ajsgrandprix.com)

**May 31 Mille Miglia Buffalonia Drivers' Meeting** at 10:45 with first car off at 11, lunch around 1 PM. Start location to be determined. Contact Joe Nuchereno to reserve. Open to all friends and family, all car makes and models.

**June 13 EuroCar Day** Rose Garden Restaurant, Wehrle Drive, Williamsville. Entry form will be included in the Summer AlfaBull.

June 23 -27 AROC National Convention, Fredericksburg, MD. Visit [www.alfaromeonews.com](http://www.alfaromeonews.com) to register. This event coincides with the Alfa Romeo Centenary.

The following events are tentative for 2010:

July BBQ drive.

August Drive (destination tbd).

Sept Watkins Glen Vintage Races (Alfa the featured marquee).

October Fall Drive

November Regular Meeting at My Tomato Pie

December Christmas Party

Fiat Group CEO Sergio Marchionne has been heading up Fiat since June 2004. He is credited with turning around the fortunes of the Italian group and making tough choices to make his company return to profitability. Of course that \$2 billion payoff from GM shortly after taking the helm sure didn't hurt. And now he is charged with the doing the same job at Chrysler while maintaining his duties at Fiat. Can he do it?

As a Dodge Ram owner with a lifetime bumper to bumper warranty, I hope the answer is yes. But as far as this club is concerned, the answer is yes for a different reason. If Chrysler can be stabilized or improved, then the chance for Fiat Group products to make it back to the states is greatly increased. The economy and the relatively weak US dollar play important roles too. But Chrysler has already said the Fiat 500 will be sold in US showrooms by this time next year. If you want a true European (Poland) built 500, get the first couple years models before the rumored North American plant takes over US production. But what about the Alfas?

Who knows with Marchionne. The return to the States has been on again, off again for over a decade. Granted, Marchionne hasn't had final say in all those years, but I think Alfa's current woes can be linked to him. The latest official word is a return no sooner than 2012, but the wording left them lots of outs. But that's still better than what Marchionne was saying just weeks prior to the Geneva show: that Alfa has to justify its very existence!

The numbers have been trending down for Alfa except when the MiTo first came out. Even the 159 didn't quite meet expectations. The most common complaint about modern Alfas is the excessive weight. This company didn't use to have that problem, at least not like it currently does. And while the rest of the world has had time to get use to front wheel drive Alfas, most of us would like to have the rear wheels powered. So how can I be blaming Marchionne for all this?

Simple, leadership. Since taking the head job at Fiat, Alfa has had five different CEO's. Harold Wester is the Boss du jour having recently been tapped to lead Alfa from the ashes of its former glories. And every time a new guy is announced, it's mentioned how great his background is and how he's a car guy that looks forward to reviving this wonderful marquee. And after one to one and a half years it ends with news of the guy leaving town (one has stayed within the company). Why can't Marchionne get someone in position and then get him to stay? How can Marchionne say that Alfa needs to be evaluated and justified when he is the one who has final say into what and how much resources are poured into this company? Why has the return always been "two years away?" Why is he complaining about Alfa even existing one week, then stating plans to expand the next? Doesn't this guy have any long term projections and a plan to make them happen?

I'll stop the rant now, but it did inspire me to return a Driver's Test for you. It's more like a pop quiz. See if you can place in the proper order Harald Wester's predecessors as Alfa CEO.

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|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Daniele Bandiera    | A) Feb '02 - Dec '03 |
| 2) Antonio Baravalle   | B) Jan '04 - Sep '05 |
| 3) Sergio Crevero      | C) Sep '05 - Dec '07 |
| 4) Karl-Heinz Kalbfell | D) Dec '07 - Jan '09 |
| 5) Luca de Meo         | E) Jan '09 - Jan '10 |



